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ABSTRACT

This book, a cultural, thematic, and sociolinguistic study of ethnic labeling in American popular speech and usage, probes for the source of the modern ethnic slur. Providing insight into the social workings of American society and culture, the book examines the history of popular speech--a rich source of information about the American collective self and cultural foibles. The slang of ethnic abuse displays the past and present tenor of ethnic relations in the United States. The book is divided into two sections, one on "traditional slurs" and another on "newer devices." Following a preface, chapters include: (1) Ethnic Slurs in Historical American Slang; (2) Six Types of Slurs and Their Themes; (3) Two Hundred Personal Names That Became Epithets; (4) Men...and One Hundred Epithets for Ethnic Women; (5) You Are What You Eat; (6) Flippity Floppity: The Semantic Inversion and Transmigration of Slurs; (7) Sly Slurs: Mispronunciation and Decapitalization of Group Names; (8) Sly Slurs: Euphemisms and Codewords; (9) Acrimonious Acronyms; and (10) Ding Dong, the Wicked Wasp Is Dead. An afterword, suggestions for further reading, and an index of "slur-names" conclude the book. (NKA)

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